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| FORM PTO-1390 (REV 5-93) | | U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE | | ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER |
| TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371 | | | | 3167/DOB/cb |
| INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/IB99/00001 | | INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE 5 JANUARY 1999 | | U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 17 C.F.R. 1.5) |
| | | | | 09/673828 |
| TITLE OF INVENTION "A PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR TREATING SOLID FUEL MATERIALS" | | | | |
| APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Léon JACCARD, et al | | | | |
| <p>RECEIVED MAY 2001 Legal St./ International Office</p> <p>Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US) <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)). <input type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). <input type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made. <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)). <input type="checkbox"/> A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)). <p>Items 11. to 16. below concern other document(s) or information included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information: new set of claims 15 to 28 for entering the preliminary amendment | | | | |

| U.S. APPLICATION NO. 10/000000, 37 CFR 1.492 | INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/IB99/00001 | ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 3167/DOB/cb | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---------------|--------------|------|--------------|----------|--|--------------|--------------------|--------|--|--------------|--|--|--|---------------|---|
| 17. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted: Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5)): Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO..... \$840.00 International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) \$670.00 No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)).. \$700.00 Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO..... \$970.00 International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4)..... \$90.00 | | CALCULATIONS <small>PTO USE ONLY</small> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT = \$ 970.= | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)). | | \$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Claims</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Number Filed</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Number Extra</th> <th style="width: 35%;">Rate</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Claims</td> <td>14 -20 -</td> <td></td> <td>X \$ 18.= \$</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent Claims</td> <td>1 -3 -</td> <td></td> <td>X \$ 78.= \$</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiple dependent claims(s) (if applicable)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>+ \$ 260.= \$</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | Claims | Number Filed | Number Extra | Rate | Total Claims | 14 -20 - | | X \$ 18.= \$ | Independent Claims | 1 -3 - | | X \$ 78.= \$ | Multiple dependent claims(s) (if applicable) | | | + \$ 260.= \$ | TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS = \$ 970.= |
| Claims | Number Filed | Number Extra | Rate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Claims | 14 -20 - | | X \$ 18.= \$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Independent Claims | 1 -3 - | | X \$ 78.= \$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Multiple dependent claims(s) (if applicable) | | | + \$ 260.= \$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity statement must also be filed. (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28). | | \$ 485.= | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SUBTOTAL = \$ 485.= | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later the <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)). | | + \$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL NATIONAL FEE = \$ 485.= | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property + | | \$ 40.= | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED = \$ 525.= | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Amount to be: refunded \$ charged \$ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees is enclosed. b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. <u>13-3860</u> in the amount of \$ <u>525.=</u> to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed. c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. <u>13-3860</u> . A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: <u>SEE PAGE 3/3</u> | | _____ <small>SIGNATURE</small> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | _____ <small>NAME</small> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | _____ <small>REGISTRATION NUMBER</small> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

09/673828
532 Rec'd PCT/PTC 06 JUL 2000

PTO/SB/13/PCT (12-97)

Approved for use through 9/30/00. OMB 0651-0032
Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

(REQUEST FOR FILING A CONTINUATION OR DIVISION OF AN INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION, PAGE 2)

6. A declaration under 37 CFR 1.63 is enclosed.

7. Priority of foreign application number _____ filed on _____
in _____ is claimed under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d).

The certified copy is enclosed.

8. A preliminary amendment is enclosed.

9. Also enclosed:

Address all future correspondence to: (May only be completed by applicant, or attorney or agent of record.)

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July 4, 2000

Date



Signature

Daniel J. O'BYRNE - Re. N. 36,625

Typed or printed name

Inventor(s)
 Assignee of complete interest. Certification under 37 CFR 3.73(b) is enclosed.
 Attorney or agent of record
 Filed under 37 CFR 1.34(a)

Registration number if acting under 37 CFR 1.34(a). _____

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Docket No. 3167/DOB/cb

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants : Léon JACCARD, et al
Ser. No. : still unknown
Filed : still unknown
For : "A process and apparatus for treating solid fuel materials"
A.U. : still unknown
Examiner : still unknown

Hon.
The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington D.C. 20231 - U.S.A.

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

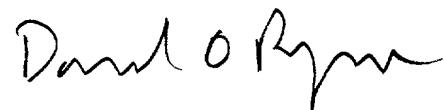
Sir,

please enter the following preliminary amendment in the above-identified Application:

substitute the original claims 1 to 14 with the enclosed redrafted claims 15 to 28.

It is to be noted that the newly submitted claims do not comprise any new matter and are merely aimed at meeting U.S. filing requirements.

Respectfully submitted



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Milan, Italy
July 4, 2000

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

15 . A process for treating solid fuel materials, such as contaminated biomass and solid city waste, and converting them into a synthesized gas, comprising: a fuel gasification step carried out in a co-current gasogen and in which a fraction of the fuel materials undergoes combustion with an oxidant and the heat developed in the combustion is exploited for gasifying the remaining material; and a cinders separation, extraction and purification step, **wherein**

- cinders are separated and removed from the fuel material after it has undergone the partial combustion and before it has been gasified;

10 - cinders are then purified and collected after eliminating from it any remaining fuel material through complete combustion;

- the fuel material which has undergone the gasification step without being fully converted to gas (CO) is recirculated by mixing it to fresh material before the latter is submitted to combustion.

15 16. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15, **wherein** the combustion gas, particularly CO₂, as developed during cinders purification, is mixed to the oxidant used for the combustion of a fraction of the fuel material.

17. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15, **wherein** the oxidant is heated to a temperature higher than 400° by means of a fraction of the available heat contained in the synthesized gas flowing at a high temperature from the gasogen, before conveying it to support the combustion of a fraction of the fuel material.

18. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15, **wherein** the oxidant includes a proportion of overheated steam.

20 19. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15, **wherein** the oxidant is fed to the gasogen under pressure.

25 20 . The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15, **wherein** plain air is used as an oxidant.

21. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15,
wherein air enriched with oxygen is used as an oxidant.

22. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15, wherein pure oxygen is used as an oxidant.

5 23. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 15,
wherein filter dust recovered in filtering the synthesized gas is added to the
cinders, after separation and removal and before purification, so that the filter
dust undergoes the same purification process.

24. An apparatus for carrying out the process of claim 15, comprising a vertical,
10 co-current gasogene (1) having an annular combustion area (11) for the com-
bustion of a fraction of the fuel material, where the oxidant is fed to both its
inner and its outer sides, and a gasification chamber (12) for gasifying the
remaining fuel material, the gasification chamber also being vertical and being
located above and downstream of the combustion area (11) in the direction of
15 fuel material displacement, wherein

- the floor of the gasification chamber (12) has a device (16, 19, 5, 6) for separating and removing cinders, comprising a port (19) feeding the cinders and the accompanying fuel material, through a feeding channel (6), to a scorification chamber (3), where the accompanying fuel material is completely burned and transformed into CO_2 , while the cinders are collected, after purification, in a cinder tank

- a recirculation device (17, 18, 8), located at the top of the gasification chamber (12) for recirculating the material which has undergone the gasification step without being completely transformed into the synthesized gas (CO), comprises a rotating material distributor in form of shovels (17), the recirculation device conveying the recirculating material to an outlet aperture (18) leading into a pipe (8) which feeds the recirculating material to a duct (7) for the supply of fresh fuel material, where the fresh fuel material is mixed with the recirculating material before being introduced into the gasogen (1) as a fuel mixture.

30 25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the vertical co-current
gasogen (1) comprises a rotating vertical auger (10) feeding the material upwards
in the annular combustion area (11).

26 . The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the recirculating device (17, 18, 8) feeds the recirculating fuel material to a feeding duct (7) for the fresh fuel material, which is provided with a first, substantially horizontal auger, where the fresh material is mixed with the recirculating material, and which in turn feeds the mixture of fresh fuel material and of recirculating material, as fuel, to the vertical auger (10) of the gasogen (1) through a second substantially horizontal auger (9) opening into the vertical shell of the vertical auger (10) of the gasogen (1).

27 . The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the cinder separation and
10 removal device (16, 19, 5, 6) comprises a distributor unit (16) for distributing,
conveying and aerating the material which collects on the floor of the gasifica-
tion chamber (12), the distributor unit comprising one or more horizontal shovels
(16) which rotate around a vertical gasogen axis, the shovels being oblique to the
floor plane, so that they sweep a radial chamber extending for the entire length
15 of the shovels (16) and having the function of smoothly distributing the
combustion gas over the entire cross-section of the gasification chamber (12)
whilst avoiding preferential gas flowing channels.

28 . The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the scorification chamber (3) comprises a rotating vertical auger (23) which is supplied with cinders and with accompanying fuel material through a substantially horizontal auger (6) opening in the vertical shell of the auger (23) of the scorification chamber (3) and in that the purification of the cinders takes place by way of combustion of the accompanying fuel material in an annular combustion chamber (24) located in the upper portion of the auger (23) of the scorification chamber (3), and supplied with oxidant at least at one of the annular peripheries of the combustion chamber.

SMALL ENTITY DECLARATION
 [37 CFR 1.9(c-f)]

Each undersigned declares that:

(1) the application attached hereto
 (2) U.S. Application Serial No. _____ filed _____
 (3) U.S. Patent No. _____ issued _____

is entitled to the benefits of "small entity" status for paying reduced fees under 35 USC 41(a) and (b) to the Patent and Trademark Office by virtue of the following:

(4) Each undersigned declares that he/she qualifies as an independent inventor, or would qualify had he/she made the invention, as defined in 37 CFR 1.9(c).

(5) The undersigned declares that he/she is an official empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below; that this concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 37 CFR 1.9(d).

(6) The undersigned declares that he/she is an official empowered to act on behalf of the organization identified below; that this organization qualifies as a nonprofit organization as defined in

(a) 37 CFR 1.9(e)(1)
 (b) 37 CFR 1.9(e)(2)
 (c) 37 CFR 1.9(e)(3)
 (d) 37 CFR 1.9(e)(4) State law of _____

(7) Each person, concern or organization to which I/we have assigned, granted, conveyed or licensed, or am under an obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey, or license any rights in the invention is listed below:

(a) no such person, concern or organization
 (b) persons, concerns or organizations listed below

[a separate declaration is required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to this invention averring to their status as "small entities."]

Full Name GREENPOWER ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGIES S.A.

Address CH-6986 CURIO - SWITZERLAND

Individual Small Business Concern Nonprofit Organization

I/we acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b))

I/we hereby declare all statements made herein of his/her own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issued thereon, or any patent to which this declaration is directed.

(8) Typed Name of Inventor Signature Date

Typed Name of Inventor Signature Date

(9) Greenpower Engineering & Technologies S.A.

Name of Small Business Concern or Nonprofit Organization

Leon JACCARD - Jean Patrick JACCARD By Signature July 3, 2000

Typed Name Signature Date

General Managers

Title of Signatory

09/673828
532 Rec'd PCT/PTC 06 JUL 2000

APPLICATION

FOR

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

* * * * *

SPECIFICATION

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that we,

Léon JACCARD,
of CURIO - SWITZERLAND
and
Jean Patrick JACCARD
of CURIO – SWITZERLAND

Both Swiss citizens

have invented certain improvements in

“A PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR TREATING SOLID FUEL
MATERIALS”

of which the following description in connection with the accompanying drawings is a specification, like reference characters on the drawings indicating like parts in the several figures.

"A process and apparatus for treating solid fuel materials"

This invention is concerned with a process for treating solid fuels, such as contaminated biomass and solid city waste, and for converting them into a synthesized gas by gasification carried out in a co-current gasogen. The invention is also concerned with an apparatus for carrying out the process.

Several processes are known in the practice and the patent literature for treating solid fuel materials, and particularly contaminated biomass and solid city waste, by transformation of the fuel materials into a synthesized gas, from which energy is then retrieved in different ways, e.g. directly in form of heat energy, or 10 indirectly by generation of electric power.

According to a process disclosed in detail, for instance, in EP-0 663 433, the fuel is first compacted in a tubular channel of preferably circular cross-section, then thermally treated by a process of gasification and pyrolysis, with generation of a synthesized gas in the tubular channel, and the carbonized material, after the 15 above heat treatment, is finally submitted to complete combustion at the end of the channel in a counter-current gasogen. In this known approach, cinders are separated only after complete combustion in the counter-current gasogen, due to the circumstance that the cinders are collected on the bottom of the gasogen, and then fall down onto a water bed acting as a sealing buffer to prevent gas 20 exchanges between the gasogen and the outside environment.

The above known approach has two main disadvantages. On the one hand, it is very difficult to have a sufficiently large gasification chamber, such that the necessary gasification step can be completed, this step consisting in the transformation of CO_2 , as developed in the partial combustion of a fraction of the material, into the CO synthesized gas, as is the object of the invention. As a 25 matter of fact, the annular gasification chamber should, if its aim is to be attained, take an excessive length, with considerable, and possibly unsurmountable, constructive problems. On the other hand, cinders are separated and removed only after the complete combustion of the material in the counter-current gasogen has taken place, so that the cinders contaminate every step in the gasification process. It is apparent that it would be advantageous to separate the 30 cinders from the fuel as soon as possible, so that the operating steps can be more easily governed or controlled.

According to another known solution for a co-current gasogen, as published in EP-0 565 935, a vertical, co-current gasogen comprises a combustion area for a fraction of the material, having an annular shape, where the oxidant is fed from both the inner and/or outer sides, and a gasification chamber for the remaining material, which again is vertical and arranged above and downstream of the combustion area, in the direction of displacement of the material.

This approach does in fact afford optimal conditions of gasification, inasmuch as it allows gasification chambers of practically unlimited extension to be built, so as to insure complete transformation of the CO₂ generated into CO. Moreover, 10 this solution also provides for recirculating the material that has undergone the gasification step without being completely converted into the synthesized gas. Such recirculation consists in allowing the above material to overflow laterally at the end of the gasification chamber and to drop laterally within the gasogen to mix with the fresh material at the bottom. However, this solution is not suitable 15 for use in the gasification of solid fuel materials producing cinders during combustion, such as contaminated biomass and solid city waste, because it lacks a device for separating, removing and purifying the cinders, which will therefore remain in the gasogen and eventually clog it.

The object of the present invention is therefore to provide a process and an 20 apparatus for treating fuel materials to convert them into a synthesized gas by gasification in a co-current gasogen, which can avoid the above drawbacks of the prior art and which can insure conditions of treatment of solid fuel materials, particularly contaminated biomass and solid city waste, giving rise to optimal cinders. In other words, the process should meet all rules in force concerning 25 protection of air and water, and should be perfectly governable and controllable, so that the apparatus can operate without interruption for long periods of time.

The above object is attained with a process for treating solid fuel materials, comprising a gasification step of the material in a co-current gasogen, according to the preamble of claim 1, having the features recited in the characterizing part of 30 claim 1.

The invention also concerns an apparatus for carrying out the process according to the preamble of claim 10 and having the features recited in the characterizing part of claim 10.

Dependent claims 2 to 9 concern preferred embodiments of the inventive process, and dependent claims 10 to 14 concern preferred embodiments of the apparatus for carrying out the inventive process, its advantages appearing more distinctly in the following disclosure of a preferred embodiment of the invention.

5 The invention will now be further described with reference to an example of the apparatus concerned, shown diagrammatically on Fig. 1.

General description of the invention

The invention comprises two main units:

10 • a vertical co-current gasogen 1, similar, in its main components, to the gasogen disclosed in EP-0 565 935, to which is here made specific reference.

• a system 2 for separating and removing "cinders" arising within the gasogen, and an associated, though geometrically distinct, device 3 for purifying the cinders.

15 The term "cinders" is used to refer to all matter which is contained in the fuel supplied to the gasogen and which is incombustible and consequently not gasifiable. The mass percentage of cinders in the fuel can vary in a wide range: generally in the range 0 to 50%.

20 The cinders may originate directly from the removal carried out within gasogen 1, or they may be part of the dusts retained in the several purification modules for the synthesized gas (cyclone filters, cloth filters, electrostatic filters). The material with a high cinder content is conveyed, through a suitable duct, to purifying device 3, also called scorification chamber. In this chamber, the material is suitably treated so that only inert matter is obtained a final product.

25 A connection duct 5 leading from gasogen 1 to scorification chamber 3 is provided with a suitable material-conveying system 6, which, depending on the geometrical relationship between the two main units, may consist in a horizontal auger 6 as shown, or in an inclined auger, or in a simple inclined chute, possibly of the vibrating type.

30 The inventive gasogen is of the kind having a recirculating bed, the flows of gas and of solid matter being co-current and oriented vertically. The heat required by

the process is supplied by the combustion of a predetermined fraction of the fuel supplied. The oxidant required for partial combustion may be, depending on circumstances, plain air, air enriched with oxygen, or pure oxygen. In any case, particularly where air is used, the oxidant is pre-heated to a temperature above 5 400°C, by using a fraction of the available heat contained in the synthesized gas coming out from gasogen 1 at a high temperature (650 to 700 °C). Pre-heating allows the PCI of the gas to be increased, while improving combustion at the same time.

10 If necessary, in order to increase the synthesis of gas molecules with high hydrogen content (H_2 , hydrocarbons), a mixture of oxidant and overheated steam may also be used.

The gasogen can operate either at atmospheric pressure or at higher pressures, in the range of a few tens of bars, so that the synthesis of hydrocarbons is promoted (particularly CH_4).

15 The fresh fuel material fed by auger 7 is mixed to the carbon resulting as a residue of gasification and emerging from duct 8, and is then propelled into the gasogen by injector auger 9. Within gasogen 1, a vertical auger 10 distributes the mixture uniformly over an extended, though narrow, annular surface, while, at the same time, lifting the mixture to the combustion area 11.

20 Until this time, the flows considered have only been submitted to physical operations. Chemical reactions start when the material reaches the immediate neighborhood of the annular combustion area 11. The oxidant atmosphere required for combustion is generated by blowing oxidant from the outside and from the inside of annular area 11. Combustion chamber 11 may be entirely built 25 in a metal resistant to high temperatures, or it may have parts of ceramic or refractory material, which will insure a long lifetime, particularly where pure oxygen is used as an oxidant in the process. Ceramic parts, or parts of a similar material, allow the process temperature to be increased, because they reduce the heat loss by conduction through metal walls. This helps the gasification process.

30 Under the action of high temperature, which is also favored by the physical concentration of the combustion, and of the oxidant atmosphere prevailing in that area, the material undergoes a number of chemical reactions, leading to the formation of gas and carbon (mainly pyrolytic and combustion reactions). The gas and carbon so generated move towards the top of gasification chamber 12,

crossing carbon bed 13 located there. During their passage, the pyrolysis/combustion gas and the carbon react together chemically and physically until a final product is obtained which comprises the synthesized gas proper and the residual carbon that has not reacted. The synthesized gas emerges from carbon bed 13

5 and collects within rest chamber 14 (with the purpose of smoothing gas removal and of decanting a part of the suspended particulate) which in turn leads to gas outlet duct 15. The residual carbon is collected by gravity in duct 8 to undergo a fresh gasification cycle. A portion of the cinders contained in the fuel is removed through duct 5 and is processed separately in scorification chamber 3.

10 The central shaft in the gasification chamber, which is integral with the rotating vertical auger, is provided, at its bottom and top ends, with respective shovels 16 and 17, having the function of material distributors.

Lower shovels 16 are arranged turbine-like, i.e. with surfaces forming an angle to the vertical direction. As the shaft rotates, shovels 16 and 17 push the surrounding material upwards, and leave a small empty cavity on their lower sides along the entire shovel lengths. The empty cavity is invaded by the gas formed in the underlying combustion and pyrolysis, which, in the absence of any substantial resistance, will be distributed radially over the entire surface. Shovels 16 and 17 have thus the task of distributing the combustion-pyrolysis gas over the entire surface of chamber 12 and, since there is a relative motion between the shovels and the material, they also prevent the formation of preferential channels in the passage of the gas. As it will appear below, shovels 16 also have the function of helping separation between carbon and inert cinders, so that the amount of fuel material to be treated in scorification chamber 3 is reduced. Upper shovels 17 are 20 arranged horizontally and have merely the task of conveying the excess carbon 25 toward recirculation port 18.

Definition of flows within the gasogen

During operation of the apparatus, a hierarchy of the rated flow rates of the several augers should at all times be maintained:

30 rated flowrate in vert. auger 10 > rated flowrate in injector auger 9 > flowrate in supply auger 7

The flow rates through vertical auger 10 and injector auger 9 are merely nominal, as vertical auger 10, for instance, will convey at any given time only what it receives from injector auger 9. In this case the flow rate through vertical

auger 10 would be equal to the flow rate through injector auger 9. Similarly, injector auger 9 will convey at any given time the flow rate of supply auger 7 plus the flow rate of the recirculated carbon. The balance of the flow rates is achieved due to the variations of their efficiencies.

5 This hierarchy is imposed in order to prevent clogging between the several augers, which would have serious consequences for the mechanics and the operation of the apparatus.

10 An important peculiarity of the inventive gasogen is the recirculation of the carbon that has not reacted during gasification. The recirculation of a fraction of the carbon is already known from EP-0 565 935 mentioned above, but the recirculation there is distinguished from the present invention because of the substantial difference between the beds in the respective configurations.

The advantages of recirculation are several:

15 • The recirculating carbon (having a substantially homogeneous chemio-physical composition) mixes with the fresh fuel before entering the gasogen, thus improving the homogeneity of the physical and chemical characteristics of the material reaching the combustion area, and consequently stabilizing that area.

20 • The recirculating carbon reaching the combustion area, which is dry, hot and of a low grading, tends to burn before the fresh fuel with which it is mixed. This leads to a saving of a part of the pyrolyzed gas developing from the fuel, which would otherwise be burned in this oxygen-rich area.

25 • The carbon acts as a filter and catalyst with respect to several substances, among which are tars. Since the bed recirculates, each passage through the combustion area regenerates the specific properties of the carbon, which would otherwise be progressively lost.

30 • The gasification chamber holds a bed comprising mainly carbon and inert matter. Since the separation and removal device is unable to remove the totality of inert matter, the recirculation prevents it from accumulating within the bed and progressively reduce the amount of carbon that can react and consequently also the efficiency of the gasification reactions. Due to recirculation, inert matter is brought to the neighborhood of the cinder removal port 19, and its rate within the carbon bed is maintained constant.

The amount of recirculating carbon is regulated by adjusting the ratio between the flow rates through supply auger 7 and through injector auger 9. The larger the flow rate through injector auger 9 with respect to the flow rate through supply auger 7, the more carbon will be recirculated. Consequently, the material 5 reaching the combustion area will have a higher rate of carbon and a lower rate of fresh fuel.

The power developed in the gasogen is regulated by adjusting the flow rate of injected fuel. An increase in the oxidant flow rate will give rise to an increase in the output power generated by the gasogen, and vice-versa for a reduction. It is 10 obvious that to a power variation of the gasogen will correspond a variation of the flow rate of the fuel in the same direction; this will give rise, consequently, to a variation of flow rate in supply auger 7.

It should be noted that supply auger 7 is preferably not controlled by an operator directly, but rather it is governed by the level detector placed at the top of the 15 carbon bed (not shown). This will provide to keep the carbon level at a height that is always slightly above the height of the recirculation port.

Scorification chamber 3

The first step in the process of removal of inert matter or cinders contained in the fuel takes place within gasogen 1, and more particularly on the bottom of gasification chamber 12. Due to the relative motion between lower shovels 16 and the 20 material, a sort of scrambling of the material is obtained. By taking advantage from the difference in density and size grading of carbon and cinders, the latter can be made to settle (or "decant") on the bottom of chamber 12. The rotary motion of shovels 16 then pushes the cinders toward the removal port 16, where 25 they are then removed.

Gasogen 1 and gasification chamber 12 are two physically quite distinct devices. Communication between them takes place in form of material removed from 30 gasogen 1 and conveyed to scorification chamber 3 and in the form of combustion gas generated in scorification chamber 3 and reintroduced to gasification chamber 12 of gasogen 1.

As already mentioned above, the transport of the material can take place through a horizontal or inclined auger 6, by chute along an inclined duct, or through any

other transport device which is able to operate at a high temperature and which is able, at the same time, to insure a complete seal.

During the transfer from gasogen 1 to scorification chamber 3, connections are also preferably provided with other transport systems 20, which, for instance, 5 convey dusts coming from the gas filtering device. It is thus possible to reduce solid emissions from gasogen 1 to the mere inert matter coming from scorification chamber 3.

Operation of the scorification chamber

10 The material reaching the scorification chamber 3 comprises a substantial fraction of inert material and a less substantial fraction of carbon, which is inevitably conveyed with the cinders.

15 The task of scorification chamber 3 is to purify the above heterogeneous mixture, so that its outlet delivers cinders only. This step raises the overall efficiency of the apparatus and avoids the loss of the chemical energy inherent to the carbon, which would otherwise be wasted. Moreover, the amount of cinders produced in 20 the gasogen is reduced to a minimum.

Cinder purification is achieved by blowing a metered amount of oxygen into scorification chamber 3 (in form of plain air, enriched air or pure oxygen), so that the carbon therein is completely burned. Oxygen may be derived off the 25 primary air circuit of the gasogen, or it may be supplied by a fully independent air circuit. Gas produced by the combustion of the material, comprising almost exclusively CO₂, a CO fraction and possibly N₂ (when using air as an oxidant), is, e.g., subsequently added, through pipe 21, to the oxidant used in the combustion of a fraction of the material, so that it is partially reconverted to CO by exploiting the "purifying" properties of the carbon bed at the same time. In 30 order to avoid disturbing the composition of the synthesized gas produced in gasogen 1, due, for instance, to the introduction of excessive and unnecessary amounts of oxygen and nitrogen, and in order to avoid removal of carbon-containing material from scorification chamber 3, the oxidant blown into the scorification chamber should be as far as possible in the required stoichiometric ratio.

The material comprising carbon and inert residue, emerging from gasogen 1 through pipe 8 and/or coming from the gas filtering device 4 through pipe 22,

reaches scorification chamber 3 through auger 6. This material is then engaged by auger 23 (which has a rated capacity larger than auger 6) and conveyed to annular combustion area 24, where, due to air blowing to the outside periphery and to the high temperature, carbon combustion takes place. The combustion can 5 proceed, if necessary, as far as distribution chamber 25. Combustion area 24 and distribution chamber 25 are preferably built in a metal resistant to high temperatures or in a ceramic or refractory material.

The combustion gas is extracted through pipe 21 for reintroduction into gasification chamber 12. The spent cinders, on the other hand, are engaged by 10 shovels 26, which are integral with the upper end of auger 23, and are swept off through a chute 27 into a storage tank 28. It should be noted that the oxidant necessary for combustion in the scorification chamber 3 may be heated in heat exchanger 29, thus exploiting the heat contained in the hot cinders. This will cool the cinders, thus reducing the heating problems in the storage tank placed 15 downstream and increasing the overall efficiency of the apparatus. Any sensors required for process control are placed at the inlet of chute 21 (not shown).

It should be noted that the material flow removed from the gasogen determines the percentage of cinders in the carbon bed: the larger the flow, the less cinders will be present in gasification chamber 12. On the other hand, the higher is the 20 flow of removed material, the more carbon is contained in it.

The simplest way to manage the operation of scorification chamber 3 is to set a fixed value for the material flow through auger 6 and an associated value for the oxidant flow, so that the stoichiometric ratio is approached. These values can be established by means of tests made on the apparatus during operation and then 25 refined with operating practice.

A more accurate way of managing scorification chamber 3, which, however, requires suitable sensors, is to regulate the flow of oxidant blown in. If the stoichiometry of the combustion is to be satisfied, the oxidant flow rate corresponds to a given carbon flow rate. The material flow rate, which also contains 30 cinders, is therefore determined as a function of the prescribed oxidant flow rate and of the carbon content in the material.

The stoichiometry of combustion can be evaluated mainly in two ways: analysis of the O₂ content in the combustion gas and/or analysis of the temperature of the combustion fumes. Through analysis of the presence of oxygen in the fumes, any

shortage or excess of fuel can be determined, and consequently an insufficient or excessive flow rate through auger 6.

Management by analysis of the fume temperature requires preliminary tests made on the operating apparatus, in order to determine the temperature as a function of excesses or shortages in the flow rate of the waste material. After this determination has been made, a comparison of the real fume temperature with the table of experimental values will show which adjustments should be made to the auger flow rate.

In summary, the most important features in the present invention are as follows:

10 a) Concerning the gasogen proper:

- A fraction of the carbon bed is recirculated.
- The recirculating carbon is mixed to the fresh fuel before reaching combustion area 11.
- Recirculation takes place outside the main gasogen structure.
- 15 • The recirculation rate, as well as the material flow rate through combustion area 11 is managed by adjusting the flow rate of injector auger 9: vertical auger 10 has just to convey all the material received.
- The power of the apparatus is adjusted by changing the primary oxidant flow rate. Fuel consumption is adjusted by controlling the flow rate in the supply auger.
- 20 • Turbine-like shovels 16, integral with central shaft 30, homogeneously distribute the combustion gas over the entire surface of the bed, and avoid formation of preferential flow channels through the bed. Shovels 16 also help inert matter contained in the fuel to settle on the bottom of the gasification chamber and push the inert matter toward the removal outlet 19.
- 25 • Ceramic or similar parts are preferably installed in hot areas, in order to increase the process temperature, improve gasification and prolong the lifetime of such areas.

b) Concerning scorification chamber 3:

- The scorification chamber 3 is physically distinct from gasogen 1, and communicates with it through cinders removal auger 6 and pipe 21, which blows the combustion gas in.
- 5 • It can handle flows having a high cinders content, originating from gasogen 1 and from the gas-filtering device 4, by means of a number of connections such as 8, 22 leading into cinders removal duct 6.
- 10 • It gives rise to a sold waste comprise only inert matter, with maximum reduction of its quantity and an improved overall efficiency of the apparatus.
- 15 • It does not generate emissions, because the combustion fumes are added to the oxidant and are reintroduced into combustion chamber 11, where they have a further chance to participate in the specific chemical reactions a draw a benefit from the purifying properties of the carbon bed.
- Combustion chambers 11 or 24 may be built in ceramic or in a similar material.

The inventive process and apparatus can be applied in the heating treatment of any organic matter, in the widest meaning of the word (including matter of natural origin as well as matter of chemical origin, such as the several hydrocarbons, plastics, rubber, etc.), even if they contain substantial amounts of inert, and therefore incombustible, matter (as high as 50%). The peculiar mechanical structure has the ability to treat fuels of differnet sizes and shapes. More particularly, the process and apparatus of the invention can use crumbled powders, briquettes, pellets, having a size or grading only limited by the mechanical conveying ability.

25 The resulting product is a so-called "weak" gas, having a chemical composition and a flow rate depending on the fuel used, and capable of being used to different purposes, such as direct combustion for heating air, water or other desired fluid, or in the production of overheated steam for operating a turbine, or for operating a gas turbine or an internal combustion engine. It could also be used as a starting material in the chemical industry (synthesis of ammonia, methanol, etc.).

30

CLAIMS

1. A process for treating solid fuel materials, such as contaminated biomass and solid city waste, and converting them into a synthesized gas, comprising: a fuel gasification step carried out in a co-current gasogen and in which a fraction of the fuel materials undergoes combustion with an oxidant and the heat developed in the combustion is exploited for gasifying the remaining material; and a cinders separation, extraction and purification step, characterized in that

- cinders are separated and removed from the fuel material after it has undergone the partial combustion and before it has been gasified;

10 - cinders are then purified and collected after eliminating from it any remaining fuel material through complete combustion;

- the fuel material which has undergone the gasification step without being fully converted to gas (CO) is recirculated by mixing it to fresh material before the latter is submitted to combustion.

15 2. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 1, characterized in that the combustion gas, particularly CO₂, as developed during cinders purification, is mixed to the oxidant used for the combustion of a fraction of the fuel material.

20 3. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 1, characterized in that the oxidant is heated to a temperature higher than 400° by means of a fraction of the available heat contained in the synthesized gas flowing at a high temperature from the gasogen, before conveying it to support the combustion of a fraction of the fuel material.

25 4. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 1 or 3, characterized in that the oxidant includes a proportion of overheated steam.

5. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the oxidant is fed to the gasogen under pressure.

6. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that plain air is used as an oxidant.

7. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that air enriched with oxygen is used as an oxidant.

8. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that pure oxygen is used as an oxidant.

5 9. The process for treating solid fuel materials according to claim 1, characterized in that filter dust recovered in filtering the synthesized gas is added to the cinders, after separation and removal and before purification, so that the filter dust undergoes the same purification process.

10 10. An apparatus for carrying out the process of claim 1, comprising a vertical,
co-current gasogene (1) having an annular combustion area (11) for the com-
bustion of a fraction of the fuel material, where the oxidant is fed to both its
inner and its outer sides, and a gasification chamber (12) for gasifying the
remaining fuel material, the gasification chamber also being vertical and being
located above and downstream of the combustion area (11) in the direction of
15 fuel material displacement, characterized in that

- the floor of the gasification chamber (12) has a device (16, 19, 5, 6) for separating and removing cinders, comprising a port (19) feeding the cinders and the accompanying fuel material, through a feeding channel (6), to a scorification chamber (3), where the accompanying fuel material is completely burned and transformed into CO_2 , while the cinders are collected, after purification, in a cinder tank

- a recirculation device (17, 18, 8), located at the top of the gasification chamber (12) for recirculating the material which has undergone the gasification step without being completely transformed into the synthesized gas (CO), comprises a rotating material distributor in form of shovels (17), the recirculation device conveying the recirculating material to an outlet aperture (18) leading into a pipe (8) which feeds the recirculating material to a duct (7) for the supply of fresh fuel material, where the fresh fuel material is mixed with the recirculating material before being introduced into the gasogen (1) as a fuel mixture.

30 11. The apparatus of claim 10, characterized in that the vertical co-current
gasogen (1) comprises a rotating vertical auger (10) feeding the material upwards
in the annular combustion area (11).

12. The apparatus of claims 10 or 11, characterized in that the recirculating device (17, 18, 8) feeds the recirculating fuel material to a feeding duct (7) for the fresh fuel material, which is provided with a first, substantially horizontal auger, where the fresh material is mixed with the recirculating material, and
5 which in turn feeds the mixture of fresh fuel material and of recirculating material, as fuel, to the vertical auger (10) of the gasogen (1) through a second substantially horizontal auger (9) opening into the vertical shell of the vertical auger (10) of the gasogen (1).

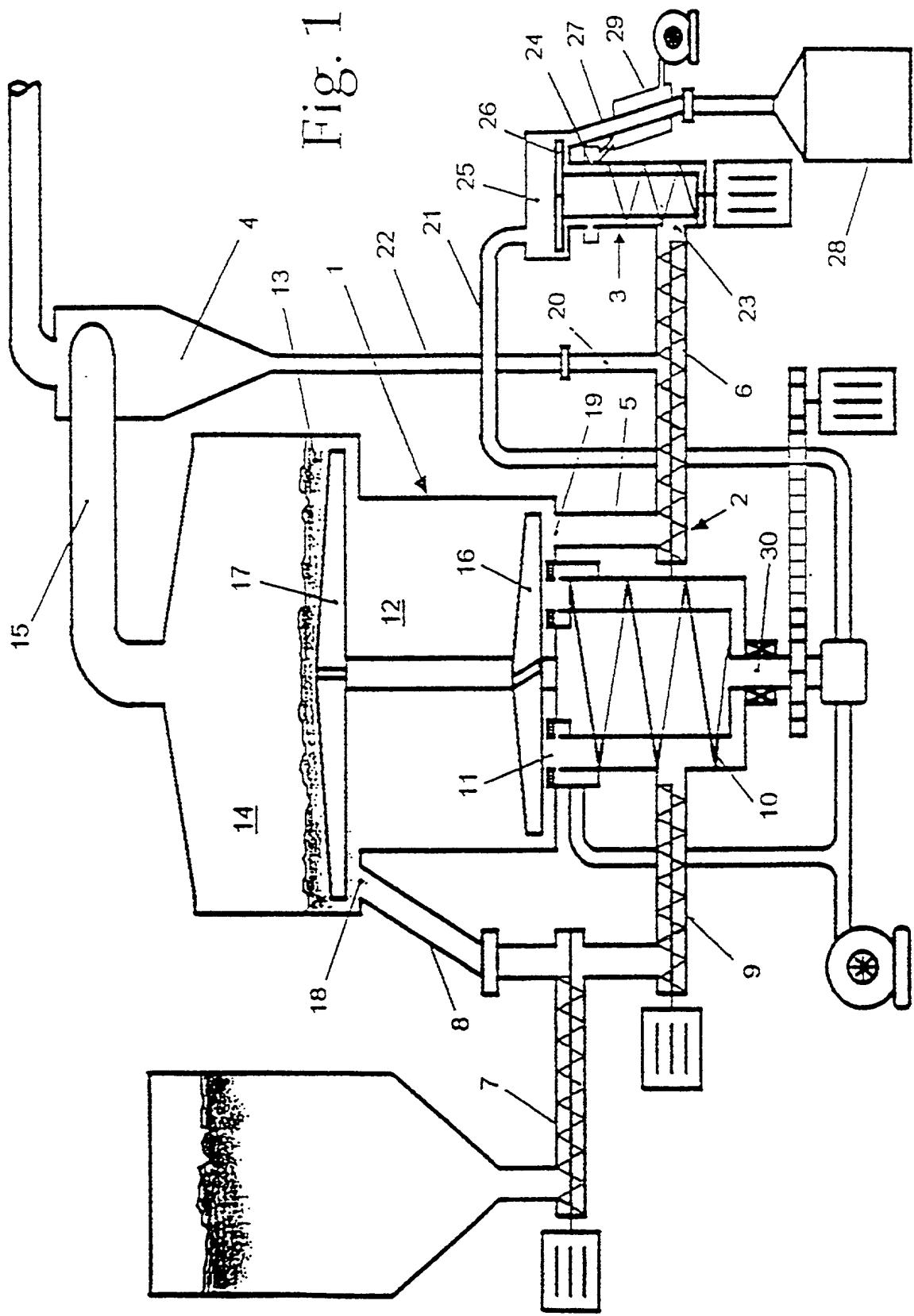
13. The apparatus of claim 10, characterized in that the cinder separation and
10 removal device (16, 19, 5, 6) comprises a distributor unit (16) for distributing, conveying and aerating the material which collects on the floor of the gasification chamber (12), the distributor unit comprising one or more horizontal shovels (16) which rotate around a vertical gasogen axis, the shovels being oblique to the floor plane, so that they sweep a radial chamber extending for the entire length
15 of the shovels (16) and having the function of smoothly distributing the combustion gas over the entire cross-section of the gasification chamber (12) whilst avoiding preferential gas flowing channels.

14. The apparatus of claim 10, characterized in that the scorification chamber (3) comprises a rotating vertical auger (23) which is supplied with cinders and with
20 accompanying fuel material through a substantially horizontal auger (6) opening in the vertical shell of the auger (23) of the scorification chamber (3) and in that the purification of the cinders takes place by way of combustion of the accompanying fuel material in an annular combustion chamber (24) located in the upper portion of the auger (23) of the scorification chamber (3), and supplied
25 with oxidant at least at one of the annular peripheries of the combustion chamber.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Solid fuels, such as contaminated biomass and solid city waste, are converted into a synthesized gas by gasification and exploitation of the energy contained in the fuels. The fuel is gasified an a co-current gasogen 5 (1), while the cinders are separated, removed and purified after a fraction of the fuels has undergone combustion and before the fuel has been gasified. Cinder purification is made by complete combustion, while the fuel that has undergone the gasification step without being completely transformed in CO is recirculated by mixing it to fresh fuel material. The process is carried out 10 in an apparatus comprising a vertical co-current gasogen (1) and a device for the separation and removal of cinders (16,19,5,6) as well as a scorification chamber (3) where cinders are purified from accompanying fuel material by complete combustion and are then collected in a waste tank (28).

Fig. 1



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**DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR
DESIGN
PATENT APPLICATION
(37 CFR 1.63)**

Declaration Submitted with Initial Filing OR Declaration Submitted after Initial Filing (surcharge (37 CFR 1.16 (e)) required)

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Attorney Docket Number | 3167 |
| First Named Inventor | |
| COMPLETE IF KNOWN | |
| Application Number | / |
| Filing Date | |
| Group Art Unit | |
| Examiner Name | |

As a below named Inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

A process and apparatus for treating solid fuel materials

the specification of which

(Title of the Invention)

is attached hereto

OR

was filed on (MM/DD/YYYY)

as United States Application Number or PCT International

Application Number

and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY) (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

| Prior Foreign Application Number(s) | Country | Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY) | Priority Not Claimed | Certified Copy Attached? |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| YES | NO | | | |
| 0035/98 | Switzerland | 01/09/1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto:

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

| Application Number(s) | Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY) | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
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[Page 1/3]

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| U.S. Parent Application or PCT Parent Number | Parent Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY) | Parent Patent Number (if applicable) |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| PCT/IB99/00001 | 01/05/1999 | |

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| Name | Registration Number | Name | Registration Number |
|-------------------|---------------------|------|---------------------|
| Daniel J. O'BYRNE | 36,625 (1) | | |

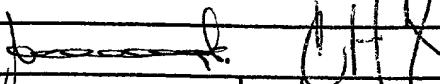
Additional registered practitioner(s) named on supplemental Registered Practitioner Information sheet PTO/SB/02C attached hereto.

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Name of Sole or First Inventor: A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

| | | | | |
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| Léon | | Jaccard | | |
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Additional Inventors are being named on the 1st supplemental Additional Inventor(s) sheet(s) PTO/SB/02A attached hereto

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ADDITIONAL INVENTOR(S) Supplemental Sheet Page 3 of 3

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any: | | <input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor | | | | |
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